

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FJ

SUBJECT: ALLIANCE FORMS MINORITY GOVT.

REF: SUVA 0453

1. ONCE AND FUTURE PRIMEMIN RATU SIR KAMISESE MARA REPORTEDLY BURST INTO TEARS OF RELIEF WHEN GOVGEN RATU SIR GEORGE CAKOBAU SUMMONED HIM LATE YESTERDAY TO FORM MINORITY ALLIANCE GOVT. GOV GEN REJECTED AS PRIMEMIN SIDDIQ KOYA WHO EXPECTED TO BE SWORN IN AS CHOICE OF WINNING INDIAN-LED NATIONAL FEDERATION PARTY (FP), BUT KOYA WAS NOT INFORMED OF GOV GEN DECISION UNTIL AFTER RATU MARA HAD TAKEN OATH.

2. THIRTEEN MEMBER CABINET REMAINS SAME EXCEPT FOR THREE POSTS LOST BY DEFEATED ALLIANCE CANDIDATES IN JUST-POST GENERAL ELECTION. ONE PORTFOLIO, FIJIAN AFFAIRS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOES TO DEPUTY PM RATU SIR PENAIA GANILAU WHO RETAINS HOME AFFAIRS; FORMER HOLDER, RATUNWILLIAM TOGANIVALU, TAKES OVER MINISTRY LANDS AND MINERAL RESOURCES FROM OUSTED S.N. WAQANIVAVALAGI. NEW MEMBER, SEN. CHARLES WALKER, RESPECTED ECONOMIST, IS TO REPLACE DEFEATED RATU JOSUA TOGANIVALU AT MINISTRY AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, AND FORESTS, WHILE J.B. NAISARA MOVES FROM MINISTRY INFORMATION, NOT YET FILLED, TO

MINISTRY EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORT (WHICH HE FORMERLY HEADED), REPLACING PENI NAQASIMA. ON BALANCE, CHANGES HAVE RESULTED IN SLIGHTLY STRONGER CABINET.

3. GOV. GEN DECISION GREETED WITH GENERAL FEELING OF RELIEF LOCALLY AT BEING SPARED, FOR A TIME AT LEAST, FROM UNCERTAINTIES AND ETHNIC EMOTIONS BUILDING UP OVER PROSPECT OF ALIEN RACE GOVERNING FIJIAN SONS OF THE SOIL. RACIAL DEMAGOGUE SAKIASI BUTADROKA, WHOSE FIJIAN NATIONALIST PARTY (FNP) LARGELY TO BLAME FOR ELECTION OUTCOME (REFTEL), HAS ALL WEEK BEEN POINTING TO EXPECTED INDIAN GOVERNMENT, GOADING FIJIANS, AND PROMISING MILITANT ANTI-INDIAN DEMONSTRATIONS. POLICE COMMISSIONER TOLD ME HE BELIEVED HE HAD REAL SECURITY PROBLEM ON HANDS UNTIL GOV. GEN. MADE HIS DECISION. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO LEARN TO WHAT DEGREE BUTADROKA'S RABBLE ROUSING AFFECTED GOV GEN ACTION.

4. ALTHOUGH NFP ISSUED STATEMENT MILDLY CRITICAL OF GOV GEN ACTION, ITS LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCING STRONG SENSE OF REPRIEVE FROM UNWANTED AND UNEXPECTED RESPONSIBILITY THRUST UPON IT. EARLIER IN DAY, AFTER REPEATED ATTEMPTS BRING ALLIANCE INTO COALITION AND/OR FORM CARETAKER GOVERNMENT HAD FAILED, NFP UNDER PRESSURE FROM GOV. GEN. HAD ANNOUNCED DECISION ELECT LEADER, CHOOSE CABINET AND FORM GOVERNMENT. DIE SEEMED IRREVOCABLY CAST FOR FIRST CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE. AFTER CAUCUSING FOR HOURS, CONTROVERSIAL SIDDIQ KOYA, FORMER LEADER OF OPPOSITION, CHOSEN AS LEADER AND APPOINTMENT SOUGHT WITH GOV. GEN. FOR HIS SWEARING IN AS PRIME MINISTER. THEN CAME ANNOUNCEMENT FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSE THAT GOVGEN HAD SWORN IN RATU MARA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"AS BEST ABLE TO COMMAND SUPPORT OF MAJORITY OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT" SINCE "PEOPLE OF FIJI HAD NOT GIVEN CLEAR MANDATE" IN ELECTIONS.

5. COMMENT: AS WE HAVE REPORTED, NFP HAS BEEN BADLY SPLIT SINCE PASSAGE OF CONTROVERSIAL LAND BILL (ALTO) WHICH EXTENDED INDIAN-HELD LEASES BUT INCREASED RENTS. KOYA VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED THIS, WHILE NFP VOTES INSTRUMENTAL IN PASSING MEASURE WITH SUPPORT OF OTHER NFP PARTY LEADERS. HENCE GOV. GEN. TO WHOM KOYA PROBABLY AS PERSONALLY DISTASTEFUL AS HE IS TO RATU MARA AND MANY OF HIS OWN NFP, COULD STATE PLAUSIBLY MARA BEST ABLE TO COMMAND SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT. BUT TENSIONS NOT YET OVER SINCE NFP HAS SUFFICIENT STRENGTH IN HOUSE TO TOPPLE ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT ON VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, AND POSSIBILITY OF EARLY ELECTIONS CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED IF NFP SUFFERS A SUDDEN ATTACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND UNITY.
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